

# Marking Delaware's Progress Improving Reentry Services

**WILMINGTON, Del.** – Governor John Carney on Monday joined state leaders at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution in Wilmington to review [progress](#) on improving reentry services for offenders and to announce more than \$1 million in grants to support Delaware's reentry initiatives. These reentry investments – a key component of Governor Carney's efforts to reduce Delaware's recidivism rate – are driven by [Executive Order 27](#), which aims to reduce recidivism through more effective coordination of housing, healthcare and counseling services, expanding access to education and vocational training, and meaningful data sharing among agencies to help offenders. The Governor's Executive Order created the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission to partner with the Department of Correction and bring together other agencies to drive reentry reforms that support justice-involved men and women with the tools they need to succeed.

*"Thanks to the hard work of the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission, the Department of Correction, and agencies across state government who have come together over the past year to improve how we help offenders reenter society and become productive members of our communities," said **Governor Carney**. "I am encouraged by our efforts to provide treatment and training to offenders while they are incarcerated, as well as provide crucial support during those initial days and months after their release from prison to increase the chances of long-term success in our communities. That's good for them and their families, and it's good for public safety across our state."*

**Delaware Department of Correction Commissioner Claire DeMatteis** said, "Delaware's reentry effort has focused over

the past year on better identifying offenders' treatment and training needs within the first 45 days of incarceration and working to meet those needs while they are incarcerated. Upon release, we are taking more active steps to put offenders in contact with existing social services, housing, healthcare and counseling services as they return to the community."

**Delaware Secretary of Health and Social Services, Dr. Kara Odom Walker** said, "Experience demonstrates that a community support system that provides access to basics like stable housing, healthcare, continued treatment for opioid addiction, food, career counseling and job search assistance improves their chances to stay on the right track and out of the criminal justice system."

"This is not the development of some new program. Today we are fundamentally changing the incarceration system in Delaware by making a prisoner's preparation to thrive in their community and the economy a true priority. To use a sports analogy, we are focused on establishing a 'sound handoff' through better collaboration between government agencies, community groups, and employers. Ensuring that social services, education, employment, and housing barriers are addressed improves outcomes, creating a better quality of life for the men and women who are re-entering society and safer communities for every Delawarean," said **Delaware Department of Labor Secretary Cerron Cade**.

Last year the Delaware Department of Education's Prison Education Program provided instruction to 1,030 students in academics, 484 in life skills classes and 1,426 in vocational trainings.

"Prison education is an essential component for the successful reintegration of those exiting prison into their communities. Recent research found that correctional education results in lower risks of recidivism and higher rates of employment," said **Director of Adult and Prison Education Maureen Whelan**,

noting educational services were expanded to areas previously inaccessible through DOC/DOE collaboration. "The Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission will support further interagency collaboration enabling those leaving prison to become valued employees and positive role models for their children and those in their communities. Prison education joins in the DCRC project so that ex-offenders have a second chance to create a new lasting impression of their worth that will affect themselves, their families, and their communities for generations to come."

Officials from the Departments of Correction, Education, Health and Social Services, Labor, Delaware State Housing Authority, and the Criminal Justice Council have worked to implement half of 19 assignments outlined in Executive Order 27 while making substantial progress on the remaining objectives. Completed objectives include:

- The Department of Correction has restructured an office whose responsibility is the coordination of reentry services; this office is tasked with implementing evidence-based correctional programs in Delaware's Level V and IV facilities;
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is now available in every prison and work release facility statewide. Today nearly 4% of offenders in these facilities are receiving MAT;
- The Department of Correction and Department of Education have partnered to administer an educational assessment and vocational skills assessment within the first 45 days of an offender's sentence;
- The Department of Correction has established Transition Accountability Plans (TAPs) for every offender with a prison sentence of one year or longer; TAPs will guide efforts to help offenders obtain a GED, high school diploma and continuing education and vocational skills training while incarcerated;

- Planning for offenders' release from incarceration now begins within their first two months of incarceration, rather than the last two months;
- Access to community supports, including existing state social services and referrals to career counseling, have been improved through collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Labor and others;
- A new graduated sanctions process for probation and parole violations has been implemented to hold offenders accountable for their actions while continuing to support reentry goals;
- Improvements have been made in behavioral health referrals to agencies with available treatment capacity;
- The Departments of Correction, Labor, and Education have signed a memorandum of understanding that sets in place a mechanism to share data across their agencies.
- A listing of available housings options is near completion and the Department of Correction and state and local public housing agencies are finalizing a plan to reduce housing barriers for returning citizens;
- A directory of case management services available across the state has been drafted, and;
- A "success rate analysis" model has been developed to measure the short- and long-term impacts of reentry programs on recidivism.

This progress is highlighted in the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission's [2019 Annual Report](#), which was presented to Governor Carney this past week. ***Read the 2019 DCRC Annual Report [here](#), along with its [appendix](#).***

Additionally, the state is aggressively pursuing federal and private grant funding to support its reentry goals. Two new grant funding allocations were announced today:

- A \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice through the Delaware Criminal Justice Council will be

used to fund new programming to support reentry in prisons and work release/violation of probation centers, establish a Community Resource Center for Sussex County offenders who are targeted to receive intensive reentry services, including case management and programming, and to fund data analysis conducted by the University of Delaware.

- Delaware, through the Department of Correction, is one of five states to receive a **\$100,000 grant from the Prison Research Innovation Network** to fund the hiring of a Prison Innovation Manager at Howard Young prison to strengthen programming for detentioners and inmates.

During the Governor's visit to Howard R. Young Correctional Institution in Wilmington, he observed the first day of instruction for a C-tech certification program that is providing telecommunication technologies, cabling, and fiber-optic systems training for 10 inmates. He also toured the DHSS mobile bridge van, which provides reentry services and referrals for former inmates. The van operates during the week in the parking lot of the prison and at the Probation Office on Cherry Lane near Wilmington. The van is funded through the Divisions of Social Services and Substance Abuse and Mental Health as a way to reach out to inmates immediately upon their release from incarceration.

Over the next year, the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission, Department of Correction, and state agency partners will continue their reentry work to meet the following goals:

- Implement Transition Accountability Plans for offenders in Level V facilities sentenced to one year or more;
- Implement the data-sharing Memorandum of Understanding that was reached between the Departments of Correction, Education and Labor;

- Transition Delaware's work release and violation of probation facilities into reentry centers to better prepare inmates for their return to the community during their final months of incarceration, and;
- Continue to expand services, treatment, and education programs, both within state agencies and in partnership with community organizations.

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